



Introduction to Samkhya Philosophy

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Introduction

Universe is infinite, Universes (plural) are infinite, all the objects animate and inanimate are infinite, every stone every pebble has infinite atoms and molecules, every cell in the human body is infinite, the sum total of these infinities can be known and is already known to us because we know infinity as we are inherently infinite, this is Sāṃkhya.

The Sāṃkhya Philosophy is one among the oldest school in India Philosophy. This is so because the basic tenets of Sāṃkhya can be seen in Nyāya, Vaiśeṣika, Yoga, Jainism, and Vedānta. The founder of Sāṃkhya Philosophy is 'Kapila' who has written the scripture 'Sāṃkhya Sūtra'. It is commented by many scholars, out of those the significant commentary is known as 'Sāṃkhya Kārika' by Iśvarakṛṣṇa.

There are two views on the origin of this school. Some believe that the word Sāṃkhya is derived from the word 'Saṃkhyā' which means number as well as right knowledge. Right knowledge is about understanding the reality by specifying the number of ultimate constituents of the universe. Others view that Sāṃkhya means 'perfect knowledge' through contemplation, inference and logic.

According to Indian philosophy Universal reality or realities (in case of Samkhya) can be understood by six insights or interpretation of realities, these are the six shad darshanas i.e. Nyaya, Vaisesikha, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta.

Samkhya is part of the Aasthikha darshanas, though essentially being the only atheistic school of philosophy because it believes in Prakṛti and Puruṣa as some form of Nirguṇ Nirakar Brahman. It completely rejects Saguna Sakar Brahman. It is Aasthika darshan because it accepts the validity of the Vedas. Thus Aasthika means the orthodox school and Nastika means the heterodox school of philosophy. The six shad darshanas i.e. Nyaya, Vaisesikha, Samkhya, Yoga, Mimamsa and Vedanta are Asthika darshanas, while Buddhism, Jainism and Carvaha or Lokayata are Nastika or Heterodox school of philosophy. There is no place or scope for existence of God in Samkhya, it is purely Atheist.

The Sāṃkhya Philosophy is regarded as dualistic realism. It is dualistic because it holds the doctrine of two ultimate realities; Prakṛti and Puruṣas. Puruṣa meaning consciousness and Prakṛiti meaning matter. The interaction of Puruṣa and Prakṛiti results in all creation. When Puruṣa and Prakṛiti are separate there is perfect equilibrium but when they come closer, within an inch of each other there is disequilibrium. This is when creation begins. It is from these two, Puruṣa and Prakṛiti, that all else in the Samkhya philosophy originates, and it is this that caused some interpreters to label Samkhya as a dualistic philosophy.

Samkhya maintains the plurality of Puruṣas (self) and Prakṛiti the existence of matter, hence, treated as pluralistic. It is realism because they viewed that both matter and spirit are equally real. The Sāṃkhya school expresses that the self (Puruṣa) and the non-self (Prakṛiti) are radically different from each other, as like, subject and object. As subject can never be the object, similarly, an object can never be the subject.

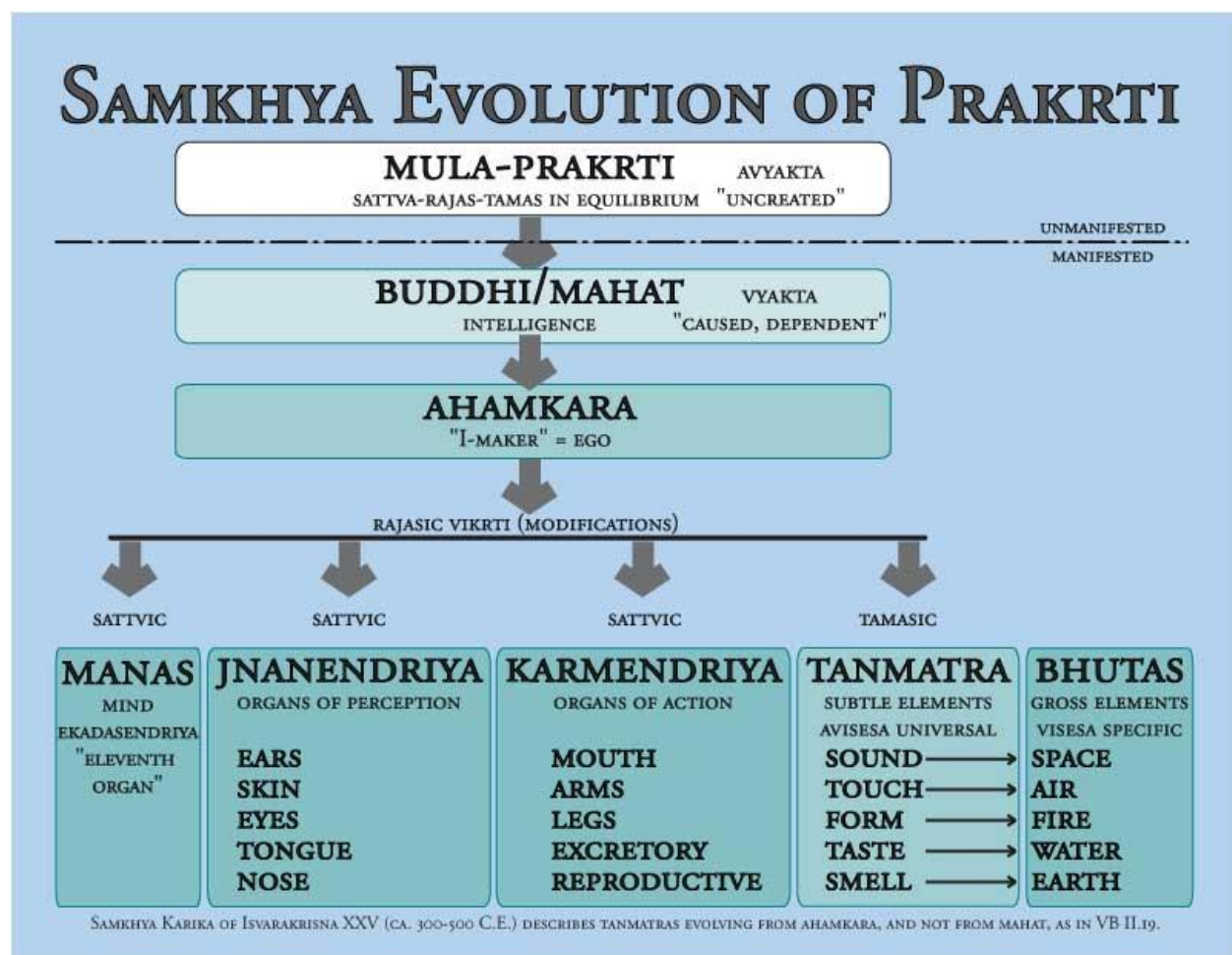
Samkhya is the only philosophy which for the first time tries to explain our cosmic existence. Samkhya could be a contemporary or even older than the Upanishads.

In Samkhya energy (Purusha) is connected to matter (Prakriti) because of desire.

In Samkhya Purushas are many (sant souls) while Prakriti is singular. Purusha is inactive, non reactive, inert, it is neither evolving, nor an evolute, it is only Prakriti which creates, which evolves.

But Prakriti cannot create on its own as it is without intelligence or energy, it needs Purusha for this purpose. Purusha gives Prakriti energy and intelligence.

This interaction produces the twenty-five tattvas (elements) which makes up the infinite universe and all the infinite objects in it.



Everything evolves from Prakriti, including the principles of Buddhi and Manas, and thus all relative consciousness has its foundation in "Nature" or "Matter". Prakriti is said to be either unmanifest or manifest; the former being termed **Pradhana**. It is explained that Prakriti unmanifest is the perfect equilibrium of the gunas, manifest it is the activity or non-equilibrium of the gunas.

Prakriti first creates or evolves the Mahat or intelligence. There is no creation without intelligence. Mahat (lit. “the Great One”), is variously translated as “Universal Mind,” “Universal Cognition or Intelligence,” “Thought Divine,” “the Intelligent Soul of the World,” “The first principle of Universal Intelligence and Consciousness,” It has also been referred to as “manifested Omniscience,” and may be viewed as “the first Cosmic aspect of Parabrahm”.

In the Samkhya philosophy, Mahat is viewed as a product of Prakriti (the term being used generally synonymous with Buddhi), or as the “first product” of root-nature (Mulaprakriti or Pradhana), and with others it is nearly synonymous with the Logos. From one perspective Buddhi is said to be the characteristic property of Mahat. In addition, one may view Manas as a “direct ray” from Mahat.

In the Samkhya philosophy, Mahat or Buddhi is the first evolute of Prakriti, or the first manifestation of the gunas. Samkhya teaches that due to cosmic vibration in Prakriti, the equilibrium of the gunas is disturbed, leading Rajas to act upon Sattva, which gives rise to Mahat / Buddhi.

When prakriti interacts with Purusha, Prakriti manifests itself and there is disequilibrium in the gunas. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas are the three gunas, which may be translated as “Powers of Nature or Prakriti”. In the Samkhya philosophy the gunas are the properties or elements that constitute Prakriti. Samkhya teaches that it is the action of the gunas, first upon each other—i.e. Rajas acting upon Sattva giving rise to Buddhi, thence Ahamkara, Manas, and the indriyas—and second upon that which they evolve—i.e. Tamas acting upon Ahamkara giving rise to the tanmatras and thence the gross elements—that establishes the entirety of manifested Nature.

From Mahat i.e. intelligence Ahankara or ego is produced. Ahankâra is the conception of “I”, Self-consciousness or Self-identity; the “I”, the egotistical and mâyâvic principle in man, due to our ignorance which separates our “I” from the Universal One-Self.

As Gaudapada says (commentary on Samkhya Karika, XXII): “From that Mahat, the ego is born. . . . From that ego the group of sixteen . . . is produced. That is, the five subtle elements . . . the eleven organs—the five organs of sense [and] the five organs of action [with] the eleventh mind having the characteristics of both (organs of sense and action). This group of sixteen is produced from the ego.”

In the Samkhya philosophy, Manas stands at the head of the ten indriyas—the five powers of cognition and five powers of action. “Manas is both a power of cognition and a power of action. Assimilation and differentiation are its distinctive functions.”

We come then to the indriyas, the “organs of action and sense”: In Samkhya philosophy, the five indriyas of Cognition (jnanendriyas) are the powers located in the Eye, Ear, Nose, Tongue and Skin—or: seeing, hearing, smell, taste and touch. The five indriyas of Action (karmendriyas) are the powers located in the Hands, Feet, Vocal Instrument, the Excretory Organ and the Organ of Generation—or: grasping, moving, speech, elimination and reproduction. Manas also produces the five subtle elements i.e. Sound, touch,

taste, smell and form and corresponding five gross elements i.e. Space, Air, Water, Earth and fire. At the head of the indriyas stands Manas. This is the full manifestation of Prakriti.

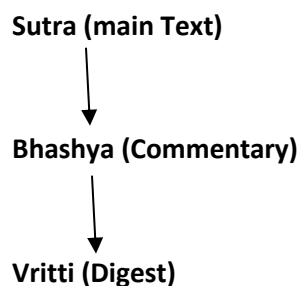
According to Richard Garbe “In Kapila’s doctrine, for the first time in the history of the world, the complete independence and freedom of the human mind, its full confidence in its own powers, were exhibited. It is the most significant system of philosophy that India has produced”. Samkhya is the most notable attempt in the realm of pure philosophy.

The system takes its name from the fact that it arrives at its conclusions by means of theoretical investigation. The word Samkhya is said by some to be derived from samkhya or number, and the name is justified as being appropriate to a system which gives an analytical enumeration of the principles of the cosmos. But this tendency to enumerate is common to all Hindu systems of thought. In the early texts samkhya is referred to in the sense of philosophical reflection and not numerical reckoning. This particular system, which expounds by careful reflection the nature of Purusa or spirits, and the other entities.

Sources and the Roots of Samkhya

All knowledge has its roots in the past. Thus elements of Samkhya are found both in the Rg Veda, the Upanishads, Mahabharata, Bhagwat Gita etc.

Any Indian philosophy is first created in the form of Sutra, then Bhashya and then the Vritti.



Tradition unanimously ascribes the authorship of Samkhya to Kapila. The sutra written by Kapila i.e. **Samkhyapravacana Sutra** and **Tattvasamasa** composed by Kapila are lost to us. Both these works are lost to us. Kapila passed his knowledge to his disciples Asuri and who in turn passed it on to Pancasikha.

The **Samkhya Karika** of IshwaraKrsna is the earliest available text on Samkhya Philosophy. IshwaraKrsna in his Karika describes himself as being in the succession of disciples from Kapila to Asuri and Pancasikha. The **Samkhya Karika** claims to be mere condensation of the earlier text called Sastitantra. This original text is lost to us. The Karika is made up of seventy stanzas thus is referred as **Samkhya-Saptati**. It is described as the pearl of the whole scholastic literature of India.

Most important commentaries on Samkhya are **Yuktidipika** (Author unknown), **Matharavrtti** of Mathara, **Tattvakaumudi** of Vacaspati Misra, and **Jayamangala** of Samkaracarya. Another important commentary on Samkhya-Karika is **Gaudapada's Bhasya** (8th century A.D.) is held to be based on the Matharavrtti.

Samkhya-tattva-Kaumudi is a philosophical work by Vacaspati Misra. Vacaspati is supposed to have based his account of the sixty topics on the Ratjavartika. It is an excellent exposition on Samkhya philosophy.

Samkhya-pravacana-bhasya is the most important commentary on the **Samkhya-pravacana-sutra** is Vijnana-bhiksu's **Samkhya-pravacana-bhasya**. It is assigned to the sixteenth century A.D. In it the author endeavors to minimize the distinction between the Samkhya and the theistic Vedanta, which he regards as the genuine Vedanta, while the Advaita Vedanta is its modern falsification.

The **Yuktidipika** is the earliest available commentary on the **Samkhya karika** of Isvarakrsna. It is the most extensive in extent and the most comprehensive in import. It expounds the system of Samkhya in all possible details and justifies it with all possible arguments. It tries its best to save the theories of Samkhya from the intellectual onslaught at the hands of other systems. The unique features of **Yuktidipika**, which raises it to heights of importance is the reference to views of pre-Ishwarakrsna Samkhya teachers, the works of which are lost to us.

Samkhya-Sara is a brief introduction to Samkhya philosophy by Vijnanabhiksu.

Samkhya-Candrika is a commentary based chiefly on the work of Vacaspati Misra i.e. **Samkhya-Tattva-Kaumudi** written by Narayanatirtha.

Samkhyataruvasantah is an commentary by Mudumba Narasimhasvamin who tries to relate Vedanta with Samkhya.

Other works of interest are Aniruddha's **Samkhyavrtti** (15 Century A.D.), Mahadeva's **Samkhyavrttisara** (17th Century A.D.), Nagesa's **Laghusamkhyasutravrtti**.

The first mention of Samkhya is in the **Svetasvatara Upanishad** though elements of Samkhya are seen in the earlier Upanishads. The **Katha Upanishad** also proscribes to the Samkhya vision of evolution. The **Maitrayani Upanishad** which seems to be post Buddhist is familiar with developed Samkhya.

In the **Mahabharata** we find thought identical to Samkhya Philosophy. **Anugita** explains the distinction of Purusa and prakriti. Anugita is an ancient Sanskrit text embedded in the Book 14 (**Ashvamedhika Parva**) of the Hindu epic the **Mahabharata**.

Though Manu does not mention Samkhya by name, the account of creation given in the first chapter, the acceptance of the three sources of knowledge, the detailed description of the three gunas show strong influence of Samkhya. Bhagvat Gita also mentions the Samkhya philosophy.

In Asvaghosha's *Bauddhacarita* we have an account between Buddha and his former teacher Arada, who holds the views of Samkhya, though in theistic settings.

Epistemology

Epistemology studies the nature of knowledge, justification, and the rationality of belief. Much of the debate in epistemology centers on four areas: (1) the philosophical analysis of the nature of knowledge and how it relates to such concepts as truth, belief, and justification, (2) various problems of skepticism, (3) the sources and scope of knowledge and justified belief, and (4) the criteria for knowledge and justification. Epistemology addresses such questions as "What makes justified beliefs justified?", "What does it mean to say that we know something?" and fundamentally "How do we know that we know" ?

Samkhya considered only three i.e. **Pratyakṣa** or **Dṛṣṭam** (direct sense perception), **Anumāna** (inference), and **Śabda** or **Āptavacana** (verbal testimony of the sages or śāstras) to be the only valid means of knowledge or **pramana**. Unlike some other schools, Samkhya did not consider the following three pramanas to be epistemically proper: **Upamāṇa** (comparison and analogy), **Arthāpatti** (postulation, deriving from circumstances) or **Anupalabdi** (non-perception, negative/cognitive proof)

Pratyakṣa (प्रत्यक्ष) means perception. It is of two types in Hindu texts: external and internal. External perception is described as that arising from the interaction of five senses and worldly objects, while internal perception is described by this school as that of inner sense, the mind.

Anumāna (अनुमान) means inference. It is described as reaching a new conclusion and truth from one or more observations and previous truths by applying reason.

Śabda (शब्द) means relying on word, testimony of past or present reliable experts meaning the Vedas.

Metaphysics

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy that explores the fundamental questions, including the nature of concepts like being, existence, and reality.

The Sāṃkhya Philosophy is regarded as dualistic realism. It is dualistic because it holds the doctrine of two ultimate realities; Prakṛti and Puruṣas.

Samkhya asks the question 'what is the ultimate cause of an object?' and, 'what are the constituents of the universe?' In other words, what is the ultimate stuff of which the various objects of the world are made?

The Sāṃkhya replies that Prakṛti is the ultimate (first) cause of all objects, including our mind, body and sense organs. It is observed that every effect must have a cause. Cause and effect are two inseparable components stand for all sorts of creation in the cosmos. Hence, all objects of the world are bounded in

the chain of cause-effect relation. This relation Sāṃkhya named as '**satkāryavāda**' and populated as 'theory of causation'.

Theory of Causation

The Sāṃkhya theory of causation is known as **satkāryavāda**. It explains the effect exists in its material cause prior to its production. For example, curd was existing in the milk before comes into existence. Hence, the effect is not a real beginning or a new creation. It is also named as '**parināmavāda**'. By refuting this view Nyāyikas said that effect is a new creation, otherwise why we say this is the effect and that was the cause.

The following arguments uphold by Sāṃkhya to support the theory **satkāryavāda**.

i) If the effect does not exist in the cause prior to its operation, none can bring it into existence out of the cause. For example, blue cannot be turned into yellow even by a thousand artists. The effect is related to its cause. Effect is nothing but the manifestation of the cause, as oil will be produced from oil seeds only. Thus, effect pre-exists in the material cause in a latent or un-manifest condition.

ii) A particular effect can be produced out of a particular material cause. A mud jar can be produced out of clay only; cloth can be produced out of threads only. Thus, it proves that the effects are existing in the cause in a latent condition.

iii) If the effect is not related to its cause, then every effect would arise from every cause. But this does not happen. Every effect does not arise from every cause. For example, butter cannot be produced from sands, waters, or oils. It is produced from milk only.

iv) The effect pre-exists in the cause since it can be produced by a potent cause only. A potent cause has causal energy to produce a particular effect. The causal energy in this case is inferred from the perception of the effect. If the effect is not existent in the cause, then the causal energy can't be related to it. If the causal energy is unrelated to the effect, then any effect will arise from any cause. Hence, the effect must be pre-existent in its potent cause only.

v) The effect pre-exists in the cause since it is identical in nature with its cause. The effect is not different from the cause. The cause is existent and therefore, the effect cannot be non-existent. Hence, effect inheres in its cause. This is so because there is no identity between entity and non-entity.

The Sāṃkhya disagrees with Nyāyikas and believes that if curd as an effect is a new creation and does not exist in its material cause (milk) prior to its production, then can we produce curd from some other liquids like oil, kerosene, diesel. ? Hence, each effect exists in its material cause prior to its production in a hidden form. Here, a question may come to your mind, i.e. if every effect must have a cause then what would be the cause of a material cause? By responding to this query Sāṃkhya philosophy expressed that Prakriti is the first and ultimate cause of all objects of the world both gross and subtle.

Prakṛti

Prakṛti is the ultimate cause of the universe. It is regarded as the first cause. All effects of the universe are based upon it. Being the first element of the universe, Prakṛti itself is uncaused, eternal, and all pervading. Hence, it is called “pradhāna”. It can’t be perceived but can be inferred from its effect. Thus, it is known as ‘anumā’. In the form of conscious elements, it is called jada, and in the form of the unmanifested objects, it is called ‘avayakta’.

Differences between Prakṛti and Objects

Objects are the effects of Prakṛti. These are dependant, relative, many and non-eternal because they are created and destroyed. But Prakṛti, on the other hand, has neither beginning nor end. It is unborn, independent, absolute, one, eternal and beyond creation and destruction. Objects are limited within the space-time continuum but Prakṛti is beyond of it. Objects are manifest and composite but Prakṛti is unmanifest and without parts. Thus, Vyāsa says that Prakṛti is both ‘is’ and ‘is-not’.

Proofs for the existence of Prakṛti

There are five arguments offered by Isvarakrishna for the existence of Prakṛti. These are as follows:

- i) The world is constituted of manifold of objects. The existence of all the objects must have a cause. This is so because they themselves can’t be the cause of their creation. Further, they are limited, dependent, relative and have an end. Hence, the cause which creates them should be unlimited, exists beyond creation and destruction, independent and eternal. Such a cause is the Prakṛiti.
- ii) The world is an amalgam of all varieties of objects. However, some common qualities are found among all the objects. As a result, pleasure, pain, and indifference subsist among all varieties of objects. This implies that there should be a common cause which possesses these three qualities (pleasure, pain and indifference) and share in all the objects once they created. This cause is Prakṛti.
- iii) The activity is generated in the potent cause. All effects arise out of causes in which they were present in an unmanifest form. Evolution means the manifestation of that which is involved. The world of objects which are effect must therefore be implicitly contained in some world cause.
- iv) Every cause has its effect. Thus, cause and effect are distinct from each other although the effect exists in its material cause prior to its production (satkāryavāda). By implication therefore, the universe must have a cause. This cause unmanifests the universe in its totality. This cause is nothing but the Prakṛti.
- v) Sāṃkhya **satkāryavāda** accepts the cause-effect relation as an inherence form which implies every effect inheres in its material cause. This holds that if the effect rolls back toward its cause, then it will

dissolve in its cause. This helps to maintain the homogeneity in the universe. The balance universe from where everything manifold is regarded as Prakṛti.

Gunās of Prakṛti

The Sāṃkhya Philosophy advocates three gunas of Prakṛti. These are Sattva, rajas and tamas. Prakṛti is a state of equilibrium of these three gunas. The word 'guna' is understood here as quality or attribute. Now, let us know about these three gunas.

i) **Sattva:** Sattva is that element of Prakṛti which is of the nature of pleasure, light (laghu) and bright or illuminating (prakāśaka). The tendency towards conscious manifestation in the senses, the mind and the intellect; the luminosity of light and the power of reflection in a mirror or crystal are all due to the operation of the element of Sattva in the constitution of things. For example, blazing up a fire, upward course of vapour etc. Sattva is believed to be white.

ii) **Rajas:** Rajas is the principle of activity in things. Its colour is red. It is active because of its mobility and stimulation. It is also the nature of pain. For example, on account of rajas, fire spread; wind blows; the mind becomes restless, etc.

iii) **Tamas:** Tamas is the principle of passivity and negativity in things. Its colour is black. It is opposed to the Sattva guna because it is heavy, laziness, drowsiness. It produces ignorance and darkness and leads to confusion and bewilderment.

Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas contradict as well as cooperate among each other to produce an object. These three gunas are present in all the objects of the world. None of them exist alone. Among them each guna tries to dominate the other two. Hence, they can't exist in a tranquility state. As a result, they can't remain pure for a single moment. Since they are changing continuously, distortion is their nature.

There are two types of transformations occur in the gunas. These are, 'svarupa' and 'virupa'.

Svarupa

During pralaya or dissolution of the world, the gunas are changing within themselves without disturbing the others. That is, Sattva changes into Sattva, rajas changes into rajas and tamas changes into tamas. Such transformation of the gunas is called '**svarupaparināma**' or change into the homogenous. In this stage, the gunas can neither create nor produce anything.

Virupa

In case of pralaya or dissolution of the world the gunas are in a state of constant flux and each tries to dominate the others. It is this flux of gunas that results in the formation of various objects. This kind of transformation is called virupa transformation or change into the heterogeneous. So, it is the starting point of the world's evolution.

Purusa

According to the Sāṃkhya Philosophy, Purusa or self is an eternal reality. Purusa is the self, subject and knower. ***It can never be an object because, the existence of objects can be proved in some ways whereas, non-existence can't be proved in anyways.*** Purusa is neither the body, nor the mind (mānas), neither ego (ahamkāra) nor intellect (buddhi). It is not the substance which has the quality of consciousness. It is itself pure-consciousness. It is the basis of all knowledge and is the supreme knower. It can't be the object of knowledge. It is the observer, eternally free, the impartial spectator and peaceful. It is beyond the space-time continuum, change, and activity. It is the self enlightened, self-proved and hence, pure consciousness. It is all pervading, formless, and eternal. Its existence can't be doubted because in its absence, all knowledge even doubt is not possible. It has been described as, devoid of three gunas, negative, inactive, solitary witness, observer, knower and of the nature of illumination.

According to Sāṃkhya Philosophy, the purusa is of the nature of pure consciousness and hence beyond the limits of Prakṛti. It is free from distortions. Its objects changes but it itself never changes. It is above self-arrogance, aversion and attachment. There are five arguments Sāṃkhya has given for establishing the existence of purusa. These are as follows:

- a) All the worldly objects are meant for some one. This is so because the conscious Prakṛti can't make use of them. Hence, all these substances are for Purusa or self. Prakṛti evolves itself in order to serve the Purusa's end. The three gunas, Prakṛti, and the subtle body, all are served to the Purusa.
- b) Substances of the universe are composed of three gunas. The purusa is the witness of three gunas and he is beyond from these gunas.
- c) Purusa is a pure consciousness which is beyond our experience and analysis. It is the substratum of all knowledge both positive and negative. There can be no experience without him. This is so because he is the sole authority of all experiential knowledge.
- d) Since Prakṛti is unconscious, it can't enjoy her creation. Hence, a conscious element is needed to make use of them. Prakṛti is the one to be enjoyed (bhogyā) and so there must be an enjoyer (bhoktā). This argument supports the existence of Purusa.
- e) There are persons who try to get relieved from all sorts of sufferings of the world. The desire for liberation and emancipation implies the existence of a person who can try for and obtain liberation. Hence, it is enforced to accept the existence of Purusa.

On the account of Sāṃkhya, there are pluralities of self or purusa. All these Purusas are identical in their essences and they are embedded with consciousness. Hence, consciousness is found in all the selves. This view is similar to Jainism, and Mimamsa because they believe in the plurality of selves

Evolution

The world and worldly objects are created because of the contact between Prakṛti and Purusa. The Prakṛti alone can't create the world because it is material. In the same manner the Purusa can't create the world independently because he is inactive. Hence, the contact between Prakṛti and Purusa is necessary for the evolution to start though they are possessing different and opposite natures.

An example can help you to understand the nature of Purusa and Prakṛti in a better way and clear manner. The Prakṛti is like a blind man and the Purusa is like a lame man cooperate each other to reach their destination. The lame man sits on the shoulders of the blind mind and pointing to him the way where to go and in which direction to move. In much the same manner, the inactive- eternal Purusa and the conscious Prakṛti cooperate with each other in order to start the evolution. Regarding their contact, the Sāṃkhya says, there is no real contact took place between Prakṛti and Purusa. But their mere closeness or nearness with each other disturbs the stability of the gunas of Prakṛti. When these three gunas; sattva, rajas, tamas disturb and disrupt, they are constantly mixing and dissociating. As a consequence, evolution begins. A sage named Kapila has described the order of creation which is accepted by the Sāṃkhya Philosophy.

The order of creation is as follows.

i) Mahat

Mahat is the first product of evolution. It is cosmic in its nature. Besides this fact, it has psychological aspect in which it is called intellect or buddhi. Here, it is important to mention that buddhi should not be understood as the same as consciousness. The reason is buddhi is material whereas consciousness is eternal. An important function of buddhi is to take decision which is a part of memory act. This helps to distinguish between the known and the knower. Sattva is predominately found as an attribute of buddhi. Buddhi helps to identify the soul or the ātman which differs from all physical objects and their qualities.

ii) Ahaṃkāra

Ahaṃkāra is understood as 'ego' in English. It is the second product of evolution. Ego is identified as "I" or "mine" feelings of an individual. Every individual has buddhi, and since ahaṃkāra is a practical element of buddhi, it is found in all individuals. Because of ego the purusa looks upon himself as an active agent, desire and strive for ends, and possesses characteristics. An individual perceives an object through sense organs. Then mind reflects on these perceptions and determines their nature. Following this, the attitude of 'mine' and 'for me' is attributed to these objects. This is nothing but regarded as 'ego'. In this product (ahaṃkāra), all these three gunas of prakṛti operates.

iii) Mānas

According to the Sāṃkhya Philosophy, mānas or mind is neither eternal nor atomic. It is constituted with parts and thus can come into contact with the different sense organs

simultaneously. Mind helps to analyze and synthesize the sense-data into determinate perceptions. Being an internal sense organ, it is aware of objects belonging to the past, present, and the future.

iv) Jñānendriyas

Jñānendriyas are known as five sense organs; nose, ears, eyes, skin, and tongue. On Sāṃkhya views, sense is an imperceptible energy or force which exists in the perceived organs and apprehends the object. This implies, the sense is not the ears but their power of hearing. Thus, the senses are not perceptible but can infer. They are informed from the functions that they perform. The five sense organs produce knowledge of touch, colour, smell, heard, and taste. All these are born because of the Purusa and they are the result of ego or ahaṁkāra.

v) Karmendriyas

Karmendriyas is understood as the five organs of action which reside in mouth, ears, feet, anus, and the sex organ. They perform the functions respectively as speech, hearing, movement, excretion, and reproduction. The cause of the creation of these organs is the desire of Purusa for his experience.

vi) Tanmātrās

There are five tanmātrās; sabda or sound, sparsa or touch, rupa or form, rasa or taste, and gandha or smell. All are very subtle because they are the elements of the objects. Hence, they can't be perceived but inferred. The Sāṃkhya School viewed that the five elements; earth, water, air, fire, and ether have their origin in the five tanmātrās.

vii) Mahābhutas

There are five mahābhutas found in the cosmos namely;

- Air or Vāyu
- Fire or Agni
- Akāśa or Ether
- Water or Jala
- Prathivi or Earth

Their respective qualities are; touch, colour, sound, taste, and smell.

Purusa and Buddhi

According to S. Radhakrishnan "Of all the evolutes of prakriti, buddhi is the most important. The senses present their objects to buddhi, which exhibits them to purusa. It is the buddhi which discriminates the difference between the purusa and prakriti and accomplishes for purusa, the fruition of all that is to be

experienced. Buddhi by means of the reflection of purusa, which is adjacent to it, becomes verily of its form and accomplishes its experience of all objects. Though Buddhi is a product of prakriti and non-conscious in character, still it appears to be intelligent. Purusa does not transfer its characteristics of consciousness to buddhi. Because of the transparency of Prakriti in her sattva part, the purusa reflected therein mistakes the sense of selfhood and agency (Abhimana) of Prakriti as belonging to itself. This misconception is in the self also as reflected in prakriti and not in self as such; even as the motionless moon reflected in water moves through the motion of water. Vacaspati holds that there can be no contact (Samyoga) between purusa and the state of buddhi, since they belong to two different orders of reality; and so it is said that there is reflection of purusa in buddhi which makes the latter conscious. The ego is the seeming unity of buddhi and purusa. When purusa sees there is a modification of buddhi simultaneous with it. When buddhi suffers modification, it catches a glimpse of purusa so that the contact (Samyoga) of purusa and prakriti is simultaneous with the unity of reflecting purusa and particular transformation of buddhi. The relation between purusa and prakriti associated with it is such that whatever mental phenomena happen in the mind are interpreted as the experiences of the purusa. Even non-discrimination belongs to buddhi, and in bondage it is reflected in purusa.

Purusa is said to be immediately connected with the buddhi pertaining to it, and indirectly with the rest. So Vijñānabhikṣu says that while purusa is the saksin of buddhi, i.e. the witness of the states of buddhi without any intermediary, it is the beholder (drasta) of others through the aid of buddhi. The free and indifferent purusa becomes the saksin when connected with buddhi.

If a real connection between soul and body is asserted, then the imperfections of the latter will have to be attributed to the former. This will prejudice the Sāṃkhya theory of the essential purity of the soul. Bondage is the reflection in purusa of the impurities of buddhi. Release is the removal of this reflection consequent on the recovery by buddhi of its original purity, dissolution into prakṛti. To say that the activity of prakṛti is for the benefit of purusa is a figurative way of saying that it is for the purification of buddhi. While buddhi is in itself sattvika, in any individual it is rajasa or tamasa, on account of the contaminating influences of its past life. The feeling of pain or pleasure which we experience arises from the interaction of buddhi and the objective world with purusa as the onlooker. While buddhi should give rise only to pleasure, on account of the play of its acquired influences, it brings about painful results. This is why the same thing affects different persons differently. Every object apprehended is viewed through the distracting medium of individual purpose. Thus, what is pleasant to one is unpleasant to another, or to the same person at a different time. We generally live in worlds of our own, where we over-estimate our particular needs and purposes and set a conventional value on our preferences. Our ordinary lives are bound up with our selfish desires and give rise to pain mixed with some amount of uncertain pleasure.

If we purify our buddhi, get rid of our past tendencies, then we shall be in a position to look at things, not as related to us, but as related among themselves, i.e. absolutely. When buddhi is dominated by sattva, it gives rise to true knowledge ; by rajas, to desire; and by tamas as to false knowledge and the like.

Theory of Bondage and Liberation

The self, who is eternal, pure conscious, and all pervading, due to its ignorance identifies itself with the mānas, ahm̐kara, and mahat which are the products of Prakrti. Thus, it experiences the worldly pain and suffering. The universe is constituted of manifold objects, and since objects are embedded with gunas and selves and even interrelated among them, suffering is unavoidable. This is so because the Sāṃkhya claims that wherever there is guna there is suffering.

Samkhya speaks of three different kinds of sufferings. They are - (1) Adhyitmika (subjective), (2) Adhibhautika (objective), and (3) Adhidaivika (pertaining to deity).

(1) Adhyitmika - It includes pains which arise from the psychological nature of mind or the pains that arise due to disorders of the mind or body. Physical pains like headache, fever etc. as well as mental sufferings like the pangs of fear, angst, greed etc. are included in this type of suffering.

(2) Adhibhautika - The second type of pain is caused by extra-organic natural causes like men, beasts, thorns etc. This type of pain may be illustrated by such pains like murder, snake-bite, pricking by thorns, biting by bees, etc.

(3) Adhidaivika (pertaining to deity). Pains caused by supernatural agencies are classed as adhidaivika. Pains inflicted by ghosts, demons etc. are of this type.

The Samkhya system speaks of three kinds of bondages. They are - (1) Natural, (2) Evolutional and (3) Personal.

Since there are sufferings and bondage, there are also paths leading to liberation, emancipation or salvation. According to Sāṃkhya account, there are two sorts of liberation. These are:

i) Jivanmukti

ii) Videhamukti

The self attains freedom from worldly suffering and realizes truth in one's life living in the earth is known as jivanmukti. In case of videhamukti, the self attains complete liberation from all sorts of sufferings. This is achieved after death only. Thus, videhamukti is known as **kaivalya**. This is understood as liberation from the gross body. The Sāṃkhya theory of liberation is termed as '**apavarga**', the purusartha or the summum bonum of life.

According to Samkhya bondage naturally occurs when Prakrti (Nature) is wrongly worshipped as spirit (Purusa). The bondage is evolutional i.e. different evolutes of Prakrti, e.g. the five elements, the sense organs etc. are taken to be the purusa or they are wrongly worshipped as the Purusa. The bondage is personal, when a person not knowing the true nature of the self performs sacrifices or gives charity to others. Thus we notice three kinds of bondage in the system. This division is based on objects we worship or on objects which we wrongly identify with Purusa. **Freedom, according to the Samkhya system, lies in**

complete isolation of the Purusa from Prakrti. When the purusa comes to know its absolute distinction from Prakrti it gets separated from Prakrti and as such becomes liberated. Prakrti now ceases its activity towards the Purusa.

This knowledge of separateness of Purusa and Prakrti is discriminative knowledge. Prakrti turns away and never comes in front Purusa who has attained Discriminating Knowledge.

Prakrti continues its activity towards those ones who have not acquired this discriminative knowledge and hence such remain in bondage. So long as Prakrti remains active, it catches the reflection of Purusa and casts its shadow on the purusa. But the change that takes place in the purusa is unreal and fictitious. Bondage is the wrong identification of Purusa with Prakrti. If the self fails to discriminate itself from Prakrti and her evolutes, it will remain in bondage

It is the realization of distinction between Purusa and Prakrti that liberates the self from all sorts of sufferings.

Richard Garbe in this context observes, "A man has attained the highest aim of human exertion if this distinction is perfectly clear to him, discriminative knowledge delivers soul from the misery of the endless flow of existence and abolishes the necessity of being born again. As soon as the soul attains this discriminative knowledge, it no longer remains under the spell of Prakrti. It becomes totally separated or isolated from it. Purusa remains in eternal isolation and Prakrti relapses into inactivity."

The purusa rests in its own form through the dissolution of buddhi. In the state of release Purusa is like a seer who has nothing to look at or it is like a mirror that has nothing to reflect. It continues its existence in lasting freedom from Prakrti and its defilements as pure intelligences for all times to come.

Richard De Smet describes the liberated Purusa thus "Pure, unrelated, he is then neither omniscient nor parviscient but a ***solitary light shining upon nothing, indifferent and serene.***"

As freedom in the Samkhya system means complete isolation or aloofness of Purusa from Prakrti, liberation is also called ***Kaivalya***. That is isolation or Kaivalya of Purusa from Prakrti.

When the purusa wrongly identifies itself either with Prakrti or with any of her evolutes, it appears to be bound. The dawning of the discriminative knowledge enables the self to realize that it is free eternally. Liberation here means the self's realization of its true nature.

When Prakrti comes to know that the purusa has realized its true nature and thereby it has seen Prakrti, Prakrti never comes before that Purusa. ***once the self is liberated, it will never be bound.***

Conclusion

When prakrti (***matter, active, evolving, unconscious, unintelligent and inherently having the three gunas i.e. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas***) is in proximity with purusa (***Energy, inactive, non evolving,***

inherently conscious and intelligent) all evolution or creation happens. The Rajas acting upon Sattva gives rise to Mahat / Buddhi or intelligence, thereupon Mahat gives rise to Ahamkara, Manas, and the indriyas i.e. five gyanindriyas and five karmendriyas. Tamas acting upon Ahamkara gives rise to the tanmatras and panch mahabhutas. The intelligence and energy of purusa is reflected in the mahat. That is the essence of **evolution concept** in Samkhya.

According to the **metaphysics** of the Samkhya the Infinite Universe, the infinite universes, the infinite objects in these infinite universes, the infinite atoms in the stone, the pebble and cell of the human body.....is an illusion. Nothing exists including this assignment on samkhya. That is the essence of Samkhya metaphysics.

When we are able infer/realize **Neti Gyanindriyas, Neti Karmendriyas, Neti Tanmantras, Neti Panchmahabhutas, Neti Manas, Neti Ahankara, Neti Buddhi**.....and **Neti Prakriti** only then “**it is**” because purusa does not have any attributes. It is pure consciousness.

This can be depicted by the following example. If you are purusa and I am prakriti. I prakriti due to my sattvic nature am transparent i.e. I am like a mirror. You purusa cannot be seen i.e. your image cannot be seen in that mirror since purusa has no attributes. But purusa can feel the presence of prakriti. That feeling is “**reflected**” in prakriti. Purusa identifies itself with that “**reflection of the feeling**”. But that reflection does belong to the purusa, it belongs to prakriti. When purusa realizes this discriminatory knowledge the Gyanendriya (perception), Karmendriyas (action), Tanmantras (subtle elements), panchmahabhutas (gross elements), manas, ahankara and even mahat/buddhi dissolves back into prakriti. What remains is prakriti and purusa. Thus the reflection is an illusion.

Epistemologically Samkhya believes only in perception, inference and testimony as valid means of attaining knowledge.

According to the **theory causation** followed by Samkhya the effect is already present in the cause for e.g. Curd is already present in the milk and the pot is already present in the clay.

The **bondage and liberation** aspect of Samkhya is explained by the fact that purusa identifies itself with reflection of prakriti which results in false knowledge and bondage, when it realizes **discriminatory knowledge** i.e. **Kaivalya gyana** all the manifestations of prakriti dissolve into prakriti itself and there is liberation. **But the purusa cannot realize this, and this also has to be realized by Mahat/buddhi (which is only a reflection of purusa’s intelligence). It is the Mahat/buddhi which realizes the separation of prakriti and purusa. When Mahat/Buddhi is purified with sattvic gunas Kaivalya gyana is realized.**

The most important feature of the Samkhya philosophy is its **rationalistic approach**. The metaphysical conclusions arrived at here are based on Logic. It is purely atheistic because there is no scope of god in this system.

The Indian scholars usually treat the Samkhya and the Yoga systems not as two separate systems, but as one system of philosophy called Samkhyayoga. The yoga philosophy takes the whole concept of evolution

from Samkhya the only difference being Yoga accepts the existence of God, while Samkhya is purely atheistic.

The Samkhya philosophy is the finest reflection of the depth of wisdom possessed by our Rsis who reflected, contemplated and meditated on this existence and our place in this existence.

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